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ABSTRACT

This profile in outline form of the English language teaching situation in Thailand discusses the role of English within Thai society and within the educational system. Areas covered include English language requirements and English within the curriculum, teaching personnel and teacher training, instructional materials, English outside the educational system, and British and American support for the teaching of English. The document concludes with a short list of current research and a brief bibliography. (CLK)

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ENGLISH-TEACHING INFORMATION CENTRE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROFILE

Country: THAILAND

October 1977

1. Role of English

1.1 The main uses made of spoken English in Thailand are:

1.1.1 as a medium of communication between educated Thais of the governing and professional classes and non-Thai speaking foreigners.

1.1.2 to meet and satisfy the requirements of the large tourist industry.

A reading ability is necessary for the large majority of tertiary level students and teachers, for administrators, and for members of certain professions, for all of whom English books are important professional tools, though a good deal of translation is often resorted to in using them.

It is highly useful for most Thais to be able to decipher the Roman script in order to read brand names in English.

1.2 English is not a medium of instruction (save in a few isolated instances such as business colleges, and where expatriates teach university courses) but it is a study language to a greater or lesser degree for almost all subjects taught at the university level and in particular for medicine, the science-based subjects and technological courses. The need for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is growing, and this is reflected in the current British Council ELT commitment. Recently it has been possible to identify limited but significant areas where English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) is much needed.

1.3 Few Thais become proficient at English during their school years and many have their interest or enthusiasm killed by poor teaching. Despite this sad fact, motivation revives when it is later seen as a job qualification, and many thousands, mainly in Bangkok, study English after school.

2. English within the educational system

2.1 The current educational system provides for 7 years of Primary School (Prathom Suksa, PS) and 5 years of Secondary School (Mathayom Suksa, MS). The school year is divided into 2 semesters; early June-mid October; early November-mid March. English is taught from PS5 upwards. However the policy regarding English Language Teaching is being modified to meet the proposals of the 4th National Plan for Educational Development (1977-81). Beginning in 1978 the present system of 4 years Lower and 3 years Upper Primary, followed by 3 years Lower and 2 years Upper Secondary, with exit points after each year-band, will change. Under the new proposals of 6 years Primary and 3 plus 3 years Secondary, English will not begin until the Secondary level, and will be an elective subject. The plan is for a 4 hour per week Core Course, with a choice of an additional elective 2 hours per week further Activating English or Basic Reading. Syllabuses

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and materials are being prepared for this. French will be offered as an elective, but as comparatively few schools are equipped with the necessary staff or materials to offer French as an alternative, it is expected that the vast majority (up to 95%) will elect English as their foreign language.

Although English will not form part of the new Primary curriculum, it is likely that English will continue to be taught in some Primary schools. Any school may choose to teach English, and the majority will probably do so, possibly as an extra-curricular activity. Parental pressure is likely to ensure this. At the time of writing, it seems there is a possibility that English may be reinstated in the curriculum. A decision is expected shortly.

As part of the Secondary English syllabus, graded readers (Longman, Heinemann etc) are used, but mainly as translation exercises, and as examples of grammar points. There is no attempt to teach literature.

Schools now set their own internal examinations, and also the final leaving examination. If English is elected, then it will form part of the final examination.

2.2 English is taught in all 36 Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), not only in those offering English major courses (see below 3.). The academic year used to be divided into 3 terms, but now operates on a 2 semester basis like the schools. There are 3 levels of teacher training, of 2 years each, leading to Lower Certificate in Education, Higher Certificate in Education and Bachelor in Education. All students do about 3 hours per week compulsory English, regardless of their major, and 9 or 10 hours if English is their major. Literature is taught separately from Language. In the degree syllabuses there are courses in selected poetry, modern prose classics, and some drama. In Higher Certificates (HC) English majors study graded readers and linguistically undemanding modern classics. At present students enter the TTCs after graduating from MS3, and are accepted on a quota basis operating locally. There is no entrance examination. Students must pass their exams set internally (including English) to progress, or are obliged to repeat.

2.3 There are 12 universities, one of which (Sri Nakharin) has 8 campuses, one 3 campuses, and 2 have 2 campuses. One university is a postgraduate civil service college and one, recently an Open University, is to become a 'closed' one. A second Open University is planned in 1980. In addition, there are a number of private degree awarding colleges offering mainly business and commercial courses. Each university sets its own entrance examination, of which English is an obligatory component. Students qualify to sit these examinations by passing the final Secondary school examination, (MS5) set internally. The Open University, which accepts students unable to find places in other universities, has a larger enrolment than all the state and private colleges combined, and is expected to continue its rapid growth. Its enrolment figures should not be taken at face value, because many students enrol with no serious intention of following courses, and the drop-out rate is high. Enrolment figures, with expansion goals, are as follows (in thousands):

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
11 Universities	75.6	81.7	86.9	91.3	94.8
Open University	97.1	113.0	122.7	134.4	142.0
Private Colleges	20.2	21.4	22.5	23.0	23.3
Totals	192.9	216.1	232.1	248.7	261.1

English is compulsory in the first year of all universities and in many it is compulsory in the second year and beyond also, according to the subjects studied. Those students who elect to major or minor in English will read some literature in English, though the level is not likely to be a great deal higher than the BEd courses in the TTCs. The main demand is for improved remedial courses and for English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Universities are worried about the attainments of students in ELT and seek to maximise foreign help and expertise. Chulalongkorn University, admittedly the wealthiest, has committed £750,000 to fund an English Language Centre, and it is probable that others would also commit funds if they were available.

Within the Department of Vocational Education there are 20 Agricultural Schools, 12 of which offer 5 year courses (from MS4 upwards) and 8 of which offer 3 year courses (MS4 upwards). Within the Institute of Technology and Vocational Education there are 10 Agricultural Colleges, all but one offering 5 year courses, (Lampang will offer a 5 year course in 1978). Bangphra offers a further 2 year degree course. English is taught for 2 hours per week in these courses, but not every year. There is also the Institute of Agricultural Technology, Mae Jo (near Chiengmai), which at present offers only a 2 year degree course. There are plans for it to expand downwards and offer in addition a 2 year Diploma course. Students may then go on to the degree course. An ODM expert is expected to make a 3 month visit to assist with Curriculum Development, and the Institute has expressed its need for expert EAP assistance and has applied for help under the KELT scheme. A British input in ELT is supported in view of the importance of agriculture to Thailand's development.

2.4 At all levels there is central control of the English curriculum and books must be chosen from an approved list. While books are sometimes added to this list, almost none are removed from it. Thus teachers tend, at each level, to stick to the books they know, and there is no integrated set of texts for the present 8 year English course, and the projected 6 year one. At each level, also, too much is attempted, so that almost all school children after the initial entry into English studies become and remain remedial English students, repeating at each higher level with a set of texts the same old structures which were taught at Primary school. This vicious circle saps interest and diminishes progress, becoming for those who last the course a vicious spiral by which the longer a student studies English the less he really knows. Whether the revised curriculum can break this spiral remains to be seen, but it is difficult to be sanguine.

2.5 There is no Inspectorate. Instead there is a cadre of civil servants who constitute the Supervisory Units, one within each Department. The Unit within General Education Department deals with Primary and Secondary education, and each of the 12 educational regions has its own Regional Supervisor, though at present only 4 of these are English specialists. (This number is expected to increase). The Supervisory Unit visits and advises teachers (when a paltry budget permits), organises In-Service and Summer Courses for teachers, writes syllabuses and prepares materials. It also sets and marks examination papers for scholarships open to teachers, and undertakes ancillary duties such as interviewing and recommending candidates for internal and overseas courses. It advises the DG of the Department and other senior officials about matters concerned with the teaching and learning of English, but has no official contact with the TTCs where English teachers are trained. The Teacher Training Department Supervisory Unit has similar functions, though it is less concerned with materials preparation.

2.6 The need for ESP has been increasingly felt at tertiary level, where separate English Departments have been set up in Science and Engineering faculties, or where, in some cases, general service departments teach English across the Faculty spectrum. While the problem is widely recognised, administrative and organisational inertia, and/or the lack of suitably qualified staff has hindered a really satisfactory solution so far. Chula, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology and Chiengmai University have all started special programmes to develop EAP, mainly in the area of upgrading reading skills. It is likely that other institutions will follow suit.

2.7 Within the Department of General Education, there is the Division of Adult Education, which provides limited opportunities for adults to study English. The Division has recently set up 4 Regional Adult Education Centres (Ubon, Lampang, Ratchburi and Songkhla) with the help of the World Bank. There are to be 3 programmes; functional literacy, general education, and interest groups (eg rural occupations, knowledge of the law etc). Each programme will consist of a radio broadcast, group meetings for follow-up discussion, (in the villages) and a correspondence course facility. Within the general education programme, English is offered at the level of current Primary school English, but developing to Lower Secondary level, as part of a 'second chance' concept. The approach will be functional; ie students will be taught only the English likely to be directly relevant to their immediate lives. The plan is for one or two hours per week, using local Primary schools. A second opportunity is to be provided through the interest group programme, where English may be studied as a subject in itself.

Whether this programme is going to be affected by the removal of English from the Primary school curriculum has still not been decided. The use of radio broadcasts in the regions for teaching English has been mooted but is another doubtful starter. At present, there is a British expert based in Bangkok assisting with the development of the Regional Adult Education Centres, but with no particular interest in English.

3. Teaching Cadre

3.1 On the whole there is no significant shortage of English teachers though there is a shortage of well-qualified staff. The English teaching cadre at Primary level is 100% local staff. With the exception of a very small number of volunteers, and an equally small number of expatriate Christian missionaries (the combined total not more than 0.5% of the whole) this is equally true of the Secondarylevel. A very small number of ex-patriate staff is involved in the teaching of English in the private schools, but none of these is sponsored by any government or agency and the total is extremely small.

The TTCs are staffed by about 575 teachers of English with the assistance of about 40 native-English speaking volunteers from the three volunteer agencies (PCV, VSO and CUSO). All the teachers have Bachelor qualifications at least, and about 25% have a higher degree. Many of the BEd degree holders are graduates of Sri Nakharin University (formerly the College of Education) which has 3 campuses in Bangkok and 4 in the regions, and offers BEd degrees with facilities for majoring in several subjects, including English. The intake is of a higher standard than the intake to the degree-awarding TTCs, because it is of higher status. The British Council withdrew support from Sri Nakharin some years ago.

A first degree is an essential qualification for teaching in a university. All the major universities employ native speakers to assist with the English teaching and many Thai staff have overseas Master's or Doctoral

degrees. However the total of expatriate staff in further education, including the universities and vocational schools, is not more than 5%.

3.2 The TTCs provide the training for the bulk of teachers in Thailand, including English teachers. At present students enter one of the 36 TTCs after MS3, and after 2 years are awarded the Lower Certificate in Education entitling them to teach in Primary Schools. Students with this Lower Certificate may then take a further 2 year course leading to the Higher Certificate in Education, which entitles them to teach in Lower Secondary schools. For this Higher Certificate they major in one subject and minor in another. All TTCs offer English major courses for Higher Certificate. 17 of the Colleges offer a BEd degree (2 years), and 7 of these offer an English major. This entitles graduates to teach in Upper Secondary, and exceptionally in the TTCs. Some students attend evening (twilight) classes, to Lower Certificate level, but these are being phased out. The Lower Certificate itself is being phased out over the next few years, and only Higher Certificate (Diploma) and Degree courses will be offered to new entrants. It is assumed that teachers in Primary Schools presently teaching English will simply stop teaching it and replace it with whatever is stipulated by the new curriculum, unless the school chooses to offer English still.

Projected enrolment figures in TTCs (in thousands)

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Lower Certificate	27.5	20.3	13.8	9.1	3.0
Higher Certificate	32.9	36.9	37.4	41.9	53.4
BEd	2.3	2.8	3.8	4.4	5.0
Total	62.7	60.0	55.0	55.4	61.4

These figures show a slight dip in totals between 1977/80 before rising again in 1981, reflecting the phasing out of the Lower Certificate and the twilight courses.

English will continue to be taught as part of the Lower Certificate until it is no longer offered as a qualification. The hours of English taught in the TTCs have been reduced for two reasons. Firstly the recent change from a 3 term year to a 2 semester year has effectively reduced the number of hours, (240 to 150) and secondly the phasing out of evening classes is being carried out. At present the reduced workload has meant teachers have had more time for supervision of teaching practice. However it is envisaged that the slack will be taken up by the increasing numbers of students doing Higher Certificate who will still have two compulsory English courses to cover, even if they are not majoring in English, and the increases of English majors in the planned upgrading of TTCs to degree-awarding status.

At present about 1700 English majors graduate in the Higher Certificate and BEd courses but the numbers majoring in English at HC level have fallen in one or two colleges by about 15%, probably in view of the removal of English from the Primary school curriculum. It is worth noting that there is some doubt as to whether the Lower Certificate will be phased out quite so drastically as planned, because there is still certain to be considerable demand for English.

In those TTCs offering BEds in English, there are about 250 English students in the first year and 200 in the second (final): ie about 20% of the total number (2.3 thousand in 1977) enrolled for the degree level course. The projected figures for 1st and 2nd years at degree level in 1981 are 2750 and 2210 respectively, suggesting, if they continue to constitute 20% of the total, around 1000 students taking English as a major by that time. At HC level about 3700 English majors are estimated. Some of these students will remain as instructors in TTCs on graduation, and some will enter non-teaching service with the government or in private colleges. The majority will presumably enter the school system and replace gradually wastage (15%) and less qualified teachers. Their number will swell as more colleges begin to offer English to degree level in addition to those which already do so. To these must be added graduates from university education departments specialising in English, particularly Sri Nakharin.

3.3 Although it is not possible to give any figures it may be assumed that within the above framework the great majority of the teaching cadre is qualified, even if this statement gives little indication of the minimum standard to be expected at any one level. Exceptions no doubt occur - for example, there are certainly some teachers with only a Lower Certificate teaching in Secondary school, particular in rural areas. On the other hand, there is a small number of graduate teachers working in the Primary schools. The other point to note here is that in the Secondary schools there is no guarantee that a 'qualified' teacher who is teaching English studied English as a major. There is the possibility that such a teacher studied English as a minor subject, but there are undoubtedly cases of 'qualified' teachers teaching English in the Primary schools who did not study English as either a major or minor subject. This however should not be exaggerated; it is of less significance than the considerable difference, in standards of language proficiency, among qualified staff at all levels in the system.

3.4 The present Lower Certificate includes 3 courses (semesters) of English, but is not intended of itself to be a preparation for the teaching of English. In most of the TTCs the only assumption that is made at the first of these courses is that everyone can read the Roman script: (this will continue to be taught even if English is dropped, as it is not part of the 'English' syllabus). Students are treated as more or less beginners and the rate of progress is extremely slow. This then indicates that the 'take-off point' for the Higher Certificate, for future English majors, is still extremely low. Whether the take-off point will be any higher by taking students at the end of Upper Secondary is debatable. There is a wide range of courses both in Higher Certificate and B Ed dealing with either 'reading' or 'writing' or 'pronunciation' etc, but without even a vague statement of the minimum standard which it is hoped every student will attain on completion, and without any attempt to fit the courses together into an integrated pattern of language learning. One result of this is that although 'the facilities' for the training of teachers may at first sight seem entirely adequate, and by comparison with some countries even impressive, many of the trained teachers are far from satisfactory, partly because no overall objectives have ever been established, and any instruction which is given is never viewed in terms of general proficiency or student application, but rather the short-term aim of the end-of-term examination.

3.5 Further training of local teachers is limited. There are some in-service courses at the TTCs, but these are scarcely either further training,

up-dating of knowledge or improvement of skills, but are concerned largely with promotion to higher civil service grades.

Peace Corps, in conjunction with the General Education Department's Supervisory Unit, organises in-service training courses for Lower Secondary school teachers in the regions. The British Council, Peace Corps and the Supervisory Unit cooperate to provide 2 eight-week courses every year for Secondary school teachers, and also a summer school. A further course is planned. There is a possibility of a major British input to in-service training aimed at Higher Secondary level (see below).

4. Teaching Materials

4.1 Within the TTCs there is generally no serious shortage of textbooks, although students frequently have difficulty in finding the money to buy them (rather strangely there seems to be no regular secondhand market in books). As a wide variety of textbooks are in use, for a variety of courses, it is not possible to make any generalised statement on their adequacy. Textbooks are nevertheless a constant problem; in some colleges and with some courses there is a good deal of chopping and changing; in other cases books are retained long after they have outlived their usefulness, while there are still other cases where an often poor quality volunteer-prepared book/booklet is used in preference to a much better professional publication. In all these situations the problems arise from teachers looking for a tailor-made book for all of the large number of courses, rather than adapting a recognised textbook, or sections from more than one (this could easily be done, with the Department buying a set of books and students making only a small contribution to the cost, but the books remaining the property of the Department for further use by other groups later). Note that the problem here is not the adequacy of the books, either in content or numbers, but the adequacy of the teachers, which is a great deal more difficult to solve.

4.2 At the school level, each main level suffers not so much from a shortage of texts but from a lack of integration between levels. Each level has its own set of texts, beginning at the beginning again, and teachers attempt to cover too much too quickly. There is a wide choice of texts available. Some have been written specially for Thailand and others are internationally known. Since it is rare for a text to be removed from the approved list some texts which have faded away elsewhere, (Gatenby's for example) continue to be reprinted for use here. The 'Intermediate English Course for Thailand' is still widely used, and 'Success with English', pioneered in the comprehensive schools, is in some Secondary schools. Alexander's various texts are all used and so are 'English 900' and 'English 901'. The most widely used text is 'English for Thai Students' 1973, the outcome of a project in ELT mounted by Michigan University called the SE Asia Regional English Project. A new version of this is in print at the time of writing. Many supplementary books for special skills (eg D H Spencer's 'Guided Composition') are also in use. The varying ages, approaches, grading and vocabulary of these texts, particularly at the Lower Secondary level, means that none is completely satisfactory, and this, in turn, leads to a proliferation of unauthorised texts throughout the country. It is to be hoped that the textbooks currently being written by the Supervisory Unit and the Department of Educational Techniques for the new syllabus resolve the problem satisfactorily.

4.3 Language laboratories and films are available in the TTCs, but cannot be said to be used effectively. In schools some use is made by the more enlightened teachers of visual aids and tape recorders, but this is the

exception rather than the rule. An expatriate TEO (Mr Hall) is preparing texts for the new Secondary School syllabus, and another, (Mr Long) has published 'Break-through' based on a functional approach, and this is being used increasingly in the TTCs. Overall there are too many undifferentiated texts chasing too few teachers who really know how to judge or use them.

5. English Outside the Educational System

There are a number of small English language schools, but with no claim to status. The chief centre for English language teaching is the USIS-sponsored AUA (American University Alumni Association).

6. British Support for the Teaching of English

6.1 There are 5 L/A staff concerned with ELT; viz ELO, AELO, and 3 outposted, (ELO post at present vacant).

There are 10 contract teachers (7 Cat IV Colombo Plan, 2 Formula and 1 Guaranteed). Two more are expected shortly, one Formula and one KELT. KELT experts will be provided on Colombo Plan terms in Thailand. The future of the Formula posts is now in doubt due to the unwillingness of the Thai contributors to accept aid other than on Colombo Plan terms.

There are 15 VSOs concerned with ELT, all but 2 at tertiary level, and these 2 in schools will be withdrawn in March 1978.

A small number of British teachers work at the British Patana School, and some others have local contracts with other educational institutions.

6.2 ELO supervises all ELT activities, formulates policy, participates on appropriate committees, contributes to special courses and summer schools as occasion arises, and arranges specialist tours.

AELO organises intensive courses for teachers and teacher trainers, and DTE courses in and out of Centre, advises and gives initial training to ELT VSOs, prepares and distributes ELT materials, organises and conducts several hundred Davies Tests annually, advises on the ELT library and supervises educational aids.

Of the 3 outposted officers, one is Director of Studies at the Language Institute of the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC), which teaches English to Thai government officials selected as Colombo Plan or AID scholars, for the Davies or ALIGU Tests. The second is at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology (KMIT) training ELT staff and producing materials for engineering students based largely on modified commercial texts. This is a British Council Contract Officer. The third post is as specialist adviser in EAP at Chulalongkorn University (at the English Language Centre) where the officer is in charge of a large-scale project in syllabus design and materials production. All 3 of these will convert to KELT. A second expert (KELT) is expected shortly at Chula.

3 of the Cat IV posts are as lecturers at DTEC. 2 of these are expected to lapse, the other convert to KELT. There are 3 other Cat IV posts at the Language and Media Centre at the Asian Institute of TEchnology (AIT), one as director. AIT is a postgraduate institution preparing science and technology students from SE Asia for higher degrees. The LMC services their English needs, and the incumbents have been preparing EAP/EST material. One One of these (possibly 2) will lapse in 1978, but is likely that the post

of director will remain a Council appointee, in practice a KELT. The other Cat IV post is in the Faculty of Humanities, Chiengmai University, preparing EAP materials across the Faculty spectrum. If renewed, this will become a KELT.

Both the Formula posts are in the Ministry of Education. One is adviser/consultant to the Supervisory Unit, General Education Department, assisting with materials writing, in-service courses planning and teaching, producing ELT radio programmes and generally with supervisory visits and advice when needed. The other fulfils a similar role, though with far less emphasis on materials production, in the Supervisory Unit, Teacher Training Department. The post involves curriculum development, in-service training, course organisation and teaching, advisory visits and a certain amount of classroom teaching. These posts may convert to KELT if ODM support them. Otherwise it is likely that they will remain Formula. A third post (Formula) is expected to be filled shortly. It will be in the Supervisory Unit, Teacher Training Department, but the incumbent will work out of Lampang in the north, and supplement the post in Bangkok. This may also convert to KELT.

The guaranteed post is at the Chitrlada Palace School, and is professionally the least important. However the school has enormous prestige, being the preparatory school for the Royal Family.

The proposed country programme for ELT support is under review, but several KELT posts are in the pipeline. One is in the English Department at Khan Kaen University, to work with English majors and work on ESP across the Faculties, and another is in the Institute of Agricultural Technology, Mae-Jo (near Chiengmai) to devise a syllabus, write and teach materials, and train the ELT staff. There is another proposed for the Central Institute of English Language (CIEL) to complete the Listening Comprehension programme initiated and almost completed by Council officers, to organize national workshops in EAP and assist as a national coordinating centre for work in the field. CIEL is in the process of merging with the English Language Centre at Chula. Considerable doubt hangs over the other proposed posts, all in the Ministry of Education. 2 or 3 have been suggested for the Supervisory Unit, Teacher Training Department, working in the TTCs in the regions. It is very doubtful that ODM would consider these priority, and thus fund them under KELT. The Council is also unlikely to fund them under Formula terms. Four other posts have been proposed for the Supervisory Unit, General Education, based in the regions, running Regional In-Service Courses (RISCs) to retrain Higher Secondary school teachers. Again, it is unlikely that ODM will support these, and the Council may also be unable to make such a substantial commitment.

6.3 The activities of the British staff cover most of the spectrum of ELT activity (with the exception of Primary English). The current emphasis on EAP reflects the growing demand for expansion in this field, and there is no doubt that the concentration of expertise, and the level of professional competence of the British staff wil go a long way to satisfy the demand. The proposed country programme indicates a swing back towards teacher training and a gradual tapering off of EAP commitment, though whether this will in fact take place in view of ODM's priorities remains to be seen. The commitment at AIT is running down, and trained locally-engaged staff are planned to take over, with the help of staff recruited abroad. The reduction of input to DTEC reflects the decline in the number of students, though it is a phasing down, not a phasing out.

6.4 There have been no recent ELT book exhibitions, though a major one is expected shortly. One recent exhibitions in educational technology contained some relevant books. The English Language Liaison Group, a number of mainly British and American ELT professionals, meets once a quarter under the chairmanship of either ELO or Director AUA. A biannual EAP seminar has recently been inaugurated, involving AELO and EAP practitioners.

6.5 British books are widely used, although expensive, and there is a constant demand for ELT films, tapes and TV series. Distribution and price are the main constraining factors.

6.6 The direct teaching of English (DTE) has expanded considerably in recent months. Courses are run for specialised groups, and in some cases are custom-built for particular groups of students. The Council makes no attempt at present to provide English courses for the open market. This is largely covered by AUA. Council DTE involves evening and Saturday morning classes for teachers of English, commercial, scientific, and medical English. The OUP 'Bellcrest' series is run twice a year for small groups of business executives, and courses in financial English have been run for Bank of Thailand as part of their training programme, using OUP ELTDU 'The Case of Harkwood Ltd'. Further markets for specialised EOP courses are being sought. There is little room for expansion on the Council premises without making substantial alterations and major developments must involve these or alternatively hiring other premises, or, as with Bank of Thailand, making use of the premises of those companies or institutions requesting classes.

7. American Support for the Teaching of English

7.1 There is considerable American support for ELT, though it has tended to become more quantitative than qualitative in recent years. Fulbright no longer operates in ELT, and nor does USAID. Ford Foundation has dropped its involvement in CIEL, though this may be temporary.

7.2 Peace Corps have a large ELT commitment in Thailand. There are 4 US appointed officers in Bangkok and a considerable L/E staff. There are currently 48 PCVs involved in ELT, deployed as follows: 25 in TTCs, 24 in Secondary schools, 4 in Vocational schools, 1 in DTEC, 2 in KMIT, 5 in Sri Nakharin, 7 in other universities and 1 in the School for the Blind. Peace Corps cooperates with the Ministry of Education and the British Council on the 8 week in-service courses for Secondary school teachers. Teachers released for these courses have their classes covered by PCVs in their schools, and 2 PCVs are seconded from General Education Department to help the Council staff in the courses. They share an office with AELO. Action, the umbrella US aid organisation within which Peace Corps operates, wishes to reduce Peace Corps ELT involvement, and expand aid in food and health development. The new Peace Corps director in Washington, and the new Peace Corps director for Thailand disagree with this. It remains to be seen whether the proportion of ELT PCVs will diminish.

7.3 By far the largest activity of the Americans is direct teaching at the USIS supported AUA Centre. AUA teaches general English to up to 18,000 students per year at its main Centre in Bangkok and branches in Chiengmai, Songkhla, Khon Kaen and Lampang. There is one senior Government ELT officer (the only senior American government ELT specialist) in charge of the ELT section, and one other US appointed. There are 3 or 4 key American L/E staff, and 75-85 L/E teachers, all American except for a handful of British, Canadians and Australians. All teachers get 27 hours training, plus follow-up supervision and guidance. Teachers are relatively poorly paid, but free transport is provided. AUA also run a 4-week summer school for 250-300 Government school teachers, almost all Secondary level.

7.4 There are 3 or 4 joint AUA/USIS contract Americans at universities. There are also about 15 volunteers in Secondary schools sponsored by Christian Volunteers, United Church of Christ, which has a US appointed director.

7.5 Quite clearly British ELT input is at the higher and specialised levels, while American support is for the larger mass market. There is a warm and cooperative relationship between us.

8. Despite the vast amount of time, money and effort devoted to ELT the results, in terms of performance by Thai students, remain at a disappointingly low level. In part the reasons are:

8.1 the unsatisfactory organisation of the school curriculum where too much is attempted too soon;

8.2 the many institutions, departments and units which play some administrative part in ELT but which fail to coordinate efforts effectively;

8.3 the poor standard of teaching and the poor physical condition of many schools;

8.4 the lack of any oral requirements in examinations;

8.5 the unsatisfactory textbook situation;

8.6 the deadening backlash effect of old-fashioned examinations which are set up unenlightened teachers and never deviate from traditional grammar and composition type requirements;

8.7 the lack of opportunity and motivation among the vast majority of learners to use English with native speakers;

8.8 the very great difficulty of English considered in linguistic contrast with Thai;

8.9 the inertia, produced by a bureaucratic approach, which makes change at any level difficult to bring about however much the necessity for it is recognised;

8.10 the custom of allocating to teachers only a part of the English course.

It is true that university departments concerned with English are well equipped, that the staff are well qualified and speak English fluently, that modern methods are well known, yet very little of the often valid training carries over into the school system. At the TTCs the instructors may be far from fluent English speakers themselves. Teachers trained to use aural-oral techniques find themselves responsible not for teaching English to a class or classes, but for the fragmentary teaching of Reading, or Writing only to some hundreds of students. The realities of the school situation are so far from the TTC preparation that many lose faith. Away from Bangkok their limited oral ability declines quickly and the treadmill of teaching merely for examination success reduces language learning to a mockery. Good teachers, if not yet numerous, are available; enlightened administrators are not lacking, even in the lower echelons; the importance of English is recognised but somehow the ends willed fail to produce an equal willing of the means. Statistically some progress has been made and more pass the final Secondary examination

than in earlier years, but this is a dubious measure of real and evident progress, at best.

Perhaps the most likely area for a rapid improvement is at the university level, where both students and staff recognise sharply that present standards are insufficient to meet the demands placed on them by English textbooks. There are many expressions of concern and some signs of a determination to modify present arrangements in favour of more realistic and practical measures. The increase in EAP activity has shown a step in the right direction and also that such measures can be taken when enough people in influential positions are convinced of the necessity. Given the manifestly good TTC facilities and the overt concern to improve English it still remains something of a puzzle why standards do not rise more noticeably. Perhaps, also, since no Council reporter can really measure long or medium term developments and deficiencies tend more quickly to catch the eye, things are better than they were a decade ago. But the more disinterested observer would be forced to admit that the cost/benefit relationship in the Thai ELT effort is low. Until the enduring problems of administrative coordination, curriculum, texts and oral requirements are tackled more effectively it is likely to remain so.

9. Current Research and Bibliography

9.1 Individualised Learning (JILAP) Primary School English Project at Khon Kaen University, involving CIEL/Ford Foundation/British Council.

9.2 Post Reports by M H Cullup, M N Long, G A Hill, K F Stefanotty, H R Stradling, R E P Wilde, C Mortimer, A Bradford, P Hargreaves (interim report March 76), J A Kirk, M A Frankel (interim reports), G Sealey:
Reports are expected soon from: A J Kidd, M K Ellis, A Dunlop, C Shettlesworth.

9.3 PASAA, previously Bulletin of English Language Centre (CIEL's Journal).

9.4 A Report on the University of Pittsburgh in Thailand 1967-71: An English Language Teaching Project.

9.5 RELC Conference Reports.

9.6 Specialist Tour Reports by J Ewer, P Edwards, M Johnson, A Trott & G Strongman, A Trott, A Ross (2), F Johnson, R Greville

9.7 Thailand: Educational Profile.

9.8 Deputy Controller's Inspection Report.

9.9 Dr Ivor Griffiths Report (March 1977).

* 9.10 THAILAND: Education Towards Equalization and Reform (UNESCO)

9.11 Guidelines to ODM White Paper on UK Aid to Developing Nations.

* Key document

If this Profile is more than a year old further up-to-date information may be found in ETIC Archives.